



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**Office of the Under Secretary for**  
**Oceans and Atmosphere**  
Washington, D.C. 20230

### Judging Guidelines: NOAA's Taking the Pulse of the Planet Award

NOAA's mission is Science, Service, and Stewardship: "To understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts, To share that knowledge and information with others, and To conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources." NOAA is a trusted source of accurate and objective scientific information in four particular areas of national and global importance:

- **Ecosystems:** Ensure the sustainable use of resources and balance competing uses of coastal and marine ecosystems, recognizing both their human and natural components.
- **Climate:** Understand changes in climate, including the El Niño phenomenon, to ensure that we can plan and respond properly.
- **Weather & Water:** Provide data and forecasts for weather and water cycle events, including storms, droughts, and floods.
- **Commerce & Transportation:** Provide weather, climate, and ecosystem information to make sure individual and commercial transportation is safe, efficient, and environmentally sound.

Projects focused on topics related to the four areas described above should be judged for this award.

If judging is done as a team, the key attributes and criteria to be used should be discussed, agreed upon beforehand, and utilized by all team members. Judges should focus on the students and what they have learned about their research topic and the scientific process in general. The quality of a student's project should be judged not only on what is exhibited but also upon their ability to discuss the work intelligently and to demonstrate their understanding of the project.

Our suggestion for the weighting of judging criteria for this award is as follows:

- Creative Ability (~ 30%)
- Scientific Approach (~ 30%)
- Thoroughness (~ 15%)
- Skill (~ 15%)
- Clarity (~ 10%)

